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Program Review : Psychology [2014]

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**Final Program Review Report Form
to
Office of the Provost & Board of Governors**

**Government and International Affairs
October 1, 4014**

1. Programs and CIP codes:

BA in Psychology-CIP Code 42.0101
MA in Psychology-CIP Code 42.0101

2. Current Academic Learning Compact is presented for each reviewed baccalaureate program.

BA in Psychology Academic Learning Compact:

1. Content/discipline knowledge and skills: Knowledge base in Psychology
 - a. Describe key concepts, principles, and overarching themes in psychology and understand and apply knowledge of psychology's content domains.
2. Communication skills:
 - a. Demonstrate effective writing in multiple formats
 - b. Exhibit effective presentation skills in multiple formats
3. Scientific inquiry/Critical thinking skills:
 - a. Demonstrate psychology information literacy.
 - b. Interpret, design and conduct basic psychological research.
4. Civic engagement/Ethical and social responsibility:
 - a. Demonstrate a sensitivity to and respect for diversity, and for the social and personal issues confronted by others as a function of their race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and cultural background.
 - b. Demonstrate the ability to recognize and make ethical decisions based on the standards and practices of the psychological field.

3. Was the program review conducted in conjunction with any external reviews?

Yes

4. Date of the last review of this program:

N/A

5. Brief description of major changes made since the previous program review:

Although the Psychology program has not been formally reviewed previously, there were dramatic changes in the department in the ten years preceding the current review. Between 2003 and 2013, at which time the program review was initiated, we nearly tripled the number of students served annually despite a very small increase in the number of faculty. In 2003, six core (tenured or tenure-track) Psychology faculty staffed the Department, aided by one permanent instructor who split teaching duties between Psychology and another department and several adjuncts. In 2013, seven core faculty staffed the department, aided by one visiting professor, one permanent instructor who splits teaching duties between Psychology and another department, and two part-time adjuncts.

In addition to a significant increase in the number of undergraduate students served and an accompanying redesigning of the curriculum to include the creation and implementation of academic learning compacts (ALCs) and student learning outcomes (SLOs) across the curriculum, we started two graduate degree programs: (1) a terminal Master's degree program in psychology and (2) a graduate certificate program in infant-family mental health.

We also have increasingly invested in our students in a number of other ways such as helping to grow our student clubs to include Psi Chi, the national honor society in psychology; Psychological Sciences Organization, a student-led club for undergraduate psychology majors; and the Graduate Association for Students in Psychology, a student-led organization for students in our graduate program.

In addition to building sound and reputable programs at the undergraduate and graduate level, faculty research and scholarship have flourished and, subsequently, visibility in our respective fields, nationally and internationally, has increased.

6. Summary of current strengths of the program

- a. One of the department's greatest strengths is its **faculty** who were described by external reviewers as a source of talent, resilience, and creative and entrepreneurial spirit. There is a high degree of collegiality among faculty who seem highly engaged and motivated to contribute to the success of the department. Senior faculty support junior faculty to create a scholarly atmosphere, which is evidenced by high levels of productivity despite limited resources (average of 1.5 peer reviewed publications per faculty per year in addition to other scholarly publications such as book chapters and invited articles, a rate far exceeding standards set by the American Psychological Association for Bachelors and Masters granting institutions and rivaling many reputable doctoral programs).
- b. Another strength of the department is its **commitment to student success**. The undergraduate program is carefully designed and assessed with student learning outcomes aligned with the most recent American Psychological Association Guidelines for Undergraduate Psychology Majors (2013), and the program continually uses course-level assessment outcomes to revise and strengthen existing courses and curriculum (i.e., SLOs and ALCs). The undergraduate curriculum provides students with a broad outlook and a civic awareness, and the department strives for students to be recognized as citizen scholars. To support this goal, faculty provide students with opportunities to become research scholars as evidenced by faculty-student co-authored peer-reviewed presentations at local, state, regional, and national conferences and peer-reviewed publications.
- c. The department delivers a **model distance learning program**, providing a good balance between live and online course offerings at both the graduate and undergraduate levels with the support of IT staff dedicated to the department.
- d. The department is committed to **community engagement** as evidenced by the fact that faculty are actively involved in the community, serving on local boards and participating in initiatives to improve the local community (e.g., faculty partnerships with neighboring Johns Hopkins Medicine/All Children's Hospital).
- e. The **department's mission is consistent with the mission of the College of Arts and Sciences** with a focus on the following areas: quantitative reasoning skills, writing, critical thinking, diversity, applied issues, and undergraduate research.
- f. The department's newly launched **graduate programs** – a terminal Master's degree in General Psychology with concentrations in Experimental and Risk, Resilience, and Prevention and a graduate certificate in Infant-Family Mental Health – have been well received as evidenced by relatively large inaugural classes in each.

- g. The department perennially is **one of the top two generators of student credit hours and in overall number of majors in the College** .

7. Summary of current weaknesses of the program

- a. The department **lacks administrative support**. Currently, there is no administrative assistant for the department causing undue administrative burdens on the department chair and graduate program director.
- b. The department **does not have adequate space**. Faculty lab space is not adequate for all faculty members, and there currently is no space for graduate students.
- c. The department's **funding for graduate students is inadequate**. Funding for graduate teaching assistants is limited, which is a recruitment issue and also negatively impacts the undergraduate curriculum as current funding is inadequate to assist faculty teaching live, low enrollment, intensive quantitative and writing courses.
- d. There is **limited flexibility in the curriculum** to include very few elective offerings and the lack of live course alternatives for students who do not want to take core course requirements online.
- e. Because of limited resources, the department currently has **no internship program** for students.
- f. The **high teaching/work load for the Chair and graduate program director** negatively affects all aspects of program functioning.
- g. **Two of the learning outcomes might be worth revisiting**. Reviewers noted that SLO 1a (understand and distinguish among the field's major theoretical traditions) is currently assessed in a gateway course (PSY 2012). It would be ideal to also have an evaluation of content knowledge on an exit exam administered during the senior year. Reviewers also commented on the outcome measure for SLO 2a (write clear and concise summaries of published research), which is currently assessed through analysis of a single article summary.

8. Summary of recommendations and/or proposed actions plans made as a result of the review

- a. At minimum, two new faculty hires – one tenure-track assistant professor and one full-time instructor – are needed to meet the curricular needs of both undergraduate and graduate students and to further build a culture of research and scholarship within the department.
- b. Administration is encouraged to continue to support the psychology department's distance learning (DL) program by providing dedicated IT support for DL courses.
- c. The department is encouraged to continue to ensure an adequate balance between the number of live and online course offerings at the graduate and undergraduate levels and ensure that decisions to offer courses online are driven by pedagogical best practices and student need. To the extent possible given limited faculty resources, it is recommended that live sections of courses typically offered online be offered periodically to provide students who so desire the opportunity to learn in a live classroom environment.
- d. To the extent possible given limited faculty resources, the department is encouraged to offer more undergraduate and graduate electives, possibly employing more adjuncts for this purpose.
- e. The department is encouraged to attempt to create a means by which to re-assess SLO 1a (understand and distinguish among the field's major theoretical traditions) before students graduate. Currently, this SLO is assessed only once, during PSY 2012. Re-assessing this SLO will allow for a comparison of performance between groups – students beginning their psychology coursework and students completing their psychology coursework. This may be accomplished in a number of ways (e.g., exit requirement, ETS testing for sampling of majors, elective senior course to allow for sampling of majors).
- f. The Psychology Department's Quantitative subcommittee is encouraged to revisit the assessment of SLO 2a (write clear and concise summaries of published research) to determine if the current outcome measure (single article summaries, which are expected to be correlated with final course grade) is adequate.
- g. A core need for any functional research-active department is adequate space. The Psychology Department is in need of adequate faculty lab space, space for graduate students, and "department" space. Space is needed to attract new faculty tenure-track hires whose research will contribute to the department, college, and university's scholarly mission and to attract graduate students and support undergraduate students who are working in close proximity to psychology faculty mentors.

- h. In collaboration with administration, the department is encouraged to pursue funding and infrastructure for the creation of an Institute for the Promotion of Psychological Resilience, a physical residence for the advancement of research among and between psychology faculty, graduate and undergraduate students, and postdoctoral fellows/visiting scholars.
- i. To further maximize the research and scholarship among faculty in the department, the department is in need of an in unit grants administrator who can help faculty identify and apply for funding as well as administer grants once funding is received.
- j. The department is encouraged to work with administration to develop an internship program suitable for the specific needs of the department and taking into consideration the particular ethical concerns associated with psychology internships. This will require an in unit internship coordinator with a background in psychology who can work in conjunction with the Career Center. This person would be responsible for developing/monitoring contracts with community agencies, supervising student performance, and addressing issues of liability for students and the university (e.g., managing necessary background checks, student malpractice insurance).
- k. In order for faculty to maintain their research scholarship, it will be important for administration to continue to support a 2-2 teaching load for tenured or tenure-earning faculty who are research active.
- l. To ensure the department and programs within the department – both undergraduate and graduate – continue to excel and also to ensure that leaders within the department maintain their research scholarship, which is vital to the success of the department, it is important for administration to support a decreased work load for the department chair and graduate program director.
- m. To increase efficiency and productivity of the department, a full-time administrative staff person is needed to support the department chair and graduate program director.
- n. There is a need for increased funding for graduate teaching assistants to support live, low enrollment, intensive quantitative and writing courses.
- o. To ensure high levels of scholarly productivity, administration may want to consider offering mini-sabbaticals (periodic one-course release in a semester) for pre-tenure and highly productive tenured faculty to allow time to focus on research at midpoints between regular sabbaticals.

- p. The department is encouraged to work with administration to provide funding to bolster the Psychological Sciences Organization Colloquium Series. For example, assistance with stipends for speakers is likely to increase the ability to bring in nationally recognized experts. PSO can work with Alumni Affairs to bring back psychology alumni to speak with psychology majors. Additionally, panel presentations with members of the community who can present information about careers, work settings, training paths, or with current graduate students may be helpful.

External Reviewer(s): Christine Ruva, Ph.D.
Sandra Willis, Ph.D.

Dates of Site Visit: April 16-17, 2014